

<p style="text-align: center;">CM/ECF</p> <p style="text-align: center;">External User's Guide</p> <p>U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Southern District of Florida</p>	<p>Chapter II</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Case Opening</p>
	<p>Section 1.1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Petition - Case Opening</p>

I. **File Petition (and related documents).**

STEP 1 Select **Bankruptcy** from the main menu.

STEP 2 The **Bankruptcy Events** screen will display. Click **Open BK Case**.

- ◆ Accept the default “**bk**” case - this cannot be changed. Tab to the next field.
- ◆ The date filed will default to a current date.
- ◆ Select the chapter. The system defaults to **Chapter 7** but it can be changed by typing in the desired chapter or by clicking on the drop down arrow.
- ◆ Answer whether the petition is being filed as an individual or as a joint petition. Select the default “**n**” if individual or change to “**y**” if there is a joint debtor.
- ◆ Accept the default “**n**” for ALL cases at the Deficiencies field. If applicable, the clerk's office will electronically issue deficiency notice(s) (see IMPORTANT INFORMATION at the end of the procedure). Click **Next**.

STEP 3 **Searching for a party** - Each debtor and joint debtor's name must be searched to determine if they already appear in the database even if page two of the petition indicates no prior case.

- ◆ Search by entering the social security number, tax identification number, last name of debtor, or company name of the debtor. **NOTE** - *All parties are matched to the same database, including debtors, joint debtors, plaintiffs, defendants, and aka's of party names (some will appear without an address and/or redacted social security number or tax id number).*

Helpful Search Hints:

- ◆ Name searches are NOT case sensitive, and wild cards like “ * ” are NOT used.
- ◆ Include correct punctuation, e.g., “O'Brien”, “Fisher & Smith Corp.” or “555-66-7777.”

<p align="center">CM/ECF</p> <p align="center">External User's Guide</p> <p>U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Southern District of Florida</p>	<p align="center">Chapter II</p> <p align="center">Case Opening</p>
	<p align="center">Section 1.1</p> <p align="center">Petition - Case Opening</p>

- ◆ Partial name entries will yield a greater match probability; e.g., searching "McD" will include the names "McDonald" and "McDaniels" and also businesses such as "McDewey Contractors, Inc." "Mc Davis" will not be included due to the space between the "c" and "D."
- ◆ Try alternative search clues if your first search was not successful.

For example, when "Smith" is searched in the example below, the following selections might appear in Party Search Results. Click on the closest matching name and a pop-up screen will appear. Repeat as needed for other possible matches OR use other search criteria such as a social security number.

NOTE - You may have to click on more than one potential match.

The screenshot displays the 'Search for a party' interface. It includes input fields for 'SSN' and 'Last/Business name', a 'Search' button, and a 'Clear' button. Below these is a 'Party search results' section with a list box containing several names: 'Smith, Bettina', 'Smith, Betty' (highlighted), 'Smith, Betty Z.', 'Smith, Bobbie', 'Smith, Crystal S.', and 'Smith, Daniel'. At the bottom of this section are buttons for 'Select name from list' and 'Create new party'. A pop-up window titled 'Person Address - Microsoft Internet Explorer' is open, displaying the following information: 'Betty Smith', 'SSN: xxx-xx-8595', '1254 NW 12 Ave', 'Miami, FL 33122', 'usa', and 'County: Miami-Dade'.

- ◆ If information in the pop-up screen matches the desired party, click **Select Name from List**.
- ◆ If no matching information appears, click **Create New Party**.

CM/ECF External User's Guide U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Southern District of Florida	Chapter II
	Case Opening
	Section 1.1
	Petition - Case Opening

STEP 4 The **Party Information** screen will display.

In our example below, the debtor is not a party in the database and must be added. Click **Create new party**. Enter the debtor information as it appears on the petition.

Party Information

Last name First name

Middle name Generation Title

SSN Tax ID

Office Address 1

Address 2 Address 3

City State Zip

County Country

Phone Fax

E-mail

ProSe Role

Party text

Alias... Review... Add all aliases before clicking the Submit button.

Submit Cancel Clear

- ◆ Accept the **ProSe** default of **No**. This indicates the debtor is represented by an attorney. Changing to **Yes** would indicate no representation.
- ◆ The debtor is the filer of the petition. Accordingly, change the Role to **Debtor**. Similarly, party information for a joint debtor must be changed to "Joint Debtor."
- ◆ Click **Alias** to add up to five aliases. Next, click **Add Aliases**, which will return the user to the **Party Information** screen. When completed, click **Submit**.

<p style="text-align: center;">CM/ECF</p> <p style="text-align: center;">External User's Guide</p> <p>U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Southern District of Florida</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Chapter II</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Case Opening</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Section 1.1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Petition - Case Opening</p>

Some key Style Guide standards are listed below to illustrate data entry standards:

- Enter name fields as they appear on the petition. Do not abbreviate unless the name appears on the petition this way. For example; "ABC Corporation" should not be entered as "ABC Corp." unless the petition uses the abbreviated name. Use correct punctuation.
- Enter Generation as applicable; e.g., Jr., Sr., III, etc.
- Enter Title as applicable; e.g., MD, PhD, etc. Do not use Mr., Mrs. or Miss.
- The Office field may be used to indicate the office name of a business debtor (this field is used infrequently).
- Three (3) address lines are available. Enter the debtor's mailing address, which may be different from the debtor's street address on line 1.
- The County is the county of the debtor's street address, not the mailing address. *HINT - Type the first letter of the county and press the key repeatedly for a faster search.*
- There is no need to enter the country unless the country of the debtor's residence is not the United States.
- **CRITICAL ISSUE - The Role of the filer defaults to "blank" and must be changed. When entering petitions, change to "Debtor" or "Joint Debtor."**
- The Party Text field may be used to add additional descriptive nature to a business debtor's name. For example, the debtor's name may appear "Hotel Credit Insurers" and the Party Text field may be, "a division of United Insurance Corporation".

STEP 5 The **Open New Bankruptcy Case** screen will display the divisional venue. Click **Next**.

- ◆ The **Search for a party (joint debtor)** screen will display *if filing a joint case* (see STEP 3). Click **Next**.

CRITICAL ISSUE - After searching and completing the joint debtor's information, the Role type must be changed to reflect "joint debtor." Failure to properly select this Role type will adversely affect automated notices sent by the system, including the joint debtor's notice of discharge.

<p style="text-align: center;">CM/ECF</p> <p style="text-align: center;">External User's Guide</p> <p>U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Southern District of Florida</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Chapter II</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Case Opening</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Section 1.1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Petition - Case Opening</p>

STEP 6 **Enter statistical data** - All data must match the first page of the petition. Read the instructions and make any changes to the defaults by clicking/unclicking check boxes or by changing items appearing in the drop down lists.

- ◆ Regarding **Fee status**, the default is **Paid**.
 - ▶ If changing to **Installments**, ensure that an *Application to Pay Filing Fee in Installments* is immediately filed.
 - ▶ Do not use **Fee Not Paid** (this function is reserved).
 - ▶ If changing to **IFP Filing Fee Waived**, ensure that a *Motion for Waiver of Chapter 7 Filing Fee* is immediately filed.
- ◆ When all entries are completed, click **Next**.

STEP 7 The **PDF Document Selection** screen will display.

- ◆ Click **Browse** to navigate to the directory where the appropriate PDF file is located. Verify you have selected the correct document by right clicking on the highlighted filename and select **Open** to view the image. Once verified, double-click the PDF file or click **Open** to select and associate it with the docket entry.
- ◆ The **Attachments to Document** option defaults to **No**.

Accept this default unless your PDF document exceeds 50 pages of scanned pages or 3.0 mega bytes of data. If so, it must be broken down into smaller files. Refer to “**Unusually large pdf files**” in Chapter I, Section 7 *Attachments to Documents* for instructions on how to upload these documents.

CRITICAL ISSUE - The image **MUST** be viewed before attaching it to ensure that it is the correct document.

Items to keep in mind when attaching PDF documents:

- ◆ The file being uploaded **MUST** be a PDF file. No other format is accepted.
- ◆ Some documents may not be combined with the petition. Reference the first page of this procedure for instructions.

<p style="text-align: center;">CM/ECF</p> <p style="text-align: center;">External User's Guide</p> <p>U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Southern District of Florida</p>	<p>Chapter II</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Case Opening</p>
	<p>Section 1.1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Petition - Case Opening</p>

- ◆ Ensure that bookmarks are created for Schedules, Lists and the Statement of Financial Affairs. Refer to Chapter I, Section 4 *General PDF Instructions-All versions of Acrobat* on how to create bookmarks.

STEP 8A *If entering a Chapter 7 petition, the **Presumption of Abuse Arises**: screen will appear.*

- ◆ For Chapter 7 cases, this information is captured in the upper right corner of the **Statement of Current Monthly Income and Means Test Calculation** form (Official Form B22A). Click the **Yes** or **No** radio button to match the information contained on this form.
- ◆ If Official Form B22A is not being filed, click **Unknown**.
- ◆ **CRITICAL ISSUE - THIS INFORMATION APPEARS ON THE MEETING OF CREDITORS NOTICE THAT IS IMMEDIATELY SERVED UPON ALL PARTIES IN THE CASE.**

Click **Next** at the following screen to continue.

STEP 8B *If entering a Chapter 13 petition, an informational screen will display the Chapter 13 Plan due date and the Government Proof of Claim deadline. Click **Next**.*

STEP 8C *If entering a Chapter 11 petition, an information screen will display the Chapter 11 Plan and Disclosure Statement due dates, and the Government Proof of Claim deadline. Click **Next**.*

STEP 9 The **Fee verification** screen will display.

- ◆ Verify that the correct fee is charged. Any incorrect amount is likely due to an incorrect chapter selection in STEP 2. If incorrect, **abort the transaction by clicking Bankruptcy in the main menu bar and return to Step 1.**
- ◆ If the filing fee is being paid in installments, enter the initial payment.

Click **Next**.

STEP 10 An instructional screen will advise the filer to upload the creditor matrix as the next step, then click on Judge/Trustee Assignment. If other documents are being

CM/ECF External User's Guide U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Southern District of Florida	Chapter II Case Opening
	Section 1.1 Petition - Case Opening

filed, they must be completed AFTER these two steps. Click **Next**.

STEP 11 The **Docket Text: Modify as Appropriate** screen will display.

Docket Text: Modify as Appropriate. Chapter 7 Voluntary Petition <input type="text"/> . [Fee Amount \$274] (Cradic, Cam)

◆ In this example, the filing fee is being paid in full.

STEP 12 The **Docket Text: Final Text** screen will display. **This is the screen which commits the transaction.** Use the browser's back button to return to prior screens if any correction is needed.

Docket Text: Final Text Chapter 7 Voluntary Petition . [Fee Amount \$274] (Cradic, Cam)
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To abort the transaction, click Bankruptcy in the main menu bar to return to Step 1. To proceed with uploading creditors and the Judge/Trustee Assignment, click **Next**.

CRITICAL ISSUE - AFTER clicking Next, DO NOT use the browser's back button to navigate through the system. Doing so may result in an additional case number assignment and filing fee.

CM/ECF External User's Guide U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Southern District of Florida	Chapter II Case Opening
	Section 1.1 Petition - Case Opening


STEP 13 The **Summary of current charges** screen will display. Select **Pay Now** to complete this transaction OR select **Continue Filing** to file additional documents. If selecting **Continue Filing**, you will be reminded to pay all fees after each transaction. All additional fee transactions will be added to the total.

- ◆ The example below demonstrates how fees will be paid for filing a new case. Click **Pay Now**.

***** IMPORTANT NOTICE *****		
Do NOT use the browser 'Back' button during the payment process.		

Summary of current charges:		
Date Incurred	Description	Amount
2006-02-09	Voluntary Petition (Chapter 7)(06-10056)	
10:48:56	[misc,volp7a] (274.00)	\$ 274.00
		Total: \$
		274.00
<input type="button" value="Pay Now"/> <input type="button" value="Continue Filing"/>		

- ◆ The **Enter Payment Information** screen will display. Enter the text fields. Items with a red “*” are required. When completed, click **Continue with Plastic Card Payment**.

Step 1: Enter Payment Information		1 2
Pay Via Plastic Card (PC) (ex: American Express, Diners Club, Discover, Mastercard, VISA)		
Required fields are indicated with a red asterisk *		
Account Holder Name:	<input type="text" value="Cam Cronic"/>	*
Payment Amount:	\$274.00	
Billing Address:	<input type="text" value="701 Clematis St"/>	*
Billing Address 2:	<input type="text"/>	
City:	<input type="text"/>	
State / Province:	<input type="text"/>	
Zip / Postal Code:	<input type="text" value="33401"/>	
Country:	<input type="text" value="United States"/>	*
Card Type:	<input type="text"/>	*
		
Card Number:	<input type="text"/>	*(Card number value should not contain spaces or dashes)
Expiration Date:	<input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/>	*
Select the "Continue with Plastic Card Payment" button to continue to the next step in the Plastic Card Payment Process.		
<input type="button" value="Continue with Plastic Card Payment"/> <input type="button" value="Cancel"/>		

CM/ECF External User's Guide U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Southern District of Florida	Chapter II Case Opening
	Section 1.1 Petition - Case Opening

- ◆ The **Payment Summary and Authorization** screen will display. Enter a check mark in the **Authorization** box. If a **Confirmation Receipt** is requested enter a valid **email address** (recommended). Click **Make Payment**, or click **Edit** to modify any previously entered user information.

Step 2: Authorize Payment 1 | 2

Payment Summary [Edit this information](#)

Address Information	Account Information	Payment Information
Account Holder Name: Cam Cradic Billing Address: 701 Clematis St Billing Address 2: West Palm City: Beach State / Province: FL Zip / Postal Code: 33401 Country: USA	Card Type: Visa Card Number: *****1111 Expiration Date: 6 / 2010	Payment Amount: \$274.00 Transaction Date: 02/09/2006 10:54 and Time: EST

Email Confirmation Receipt
To have a confirmation sent to you upon completion of this transaction, provide an email address and confirmation below.

Email Address:

Confirm Email Address:

Authorization and Disclosure

Required fields are indicated with a red asterisk *

I authorize a charge to my card account for the above amount in accordance with my card issuer agreement. ☒ *

Press the "Submit Payment" Button only once. Pressing the button more than once could result in multiple transactions.

- ◆ A **Payment Confirmation** screen will display. If desired, print a copy of the transaction receipt by clicking on the underlined hyperlink. When finished, click **Close Window**.

**U.S. Bankruptcy Court
Southern District of Florida**

Thank you. Your transaction in the amount of **\$ 274.00** has been completed.

Please [print a copy of](#) your transaction receipt for future reference. The transaction number is **84665**.

Detail description:
Voluntary Petition (Chapter 7)(06-10056) [misc,volp7a] (274.00)

CM/ECF External User's Guide U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Southern District of Florida	Chapter II Case Opening
	Section 1.1 Petition - Case Opening

CRITICAL ISSUE - Registered users must pay *ALL* filing fees prior to 3 a.m. the day following the transaction(s). Failure to pay will result in a suspension of the registered user's CM/ECF account except to pay all outstanding fees. When all fees have been paid the account will automatically revert back to an active status.

If a registered user has been "locked out" of ECF due to failure to pay fees and the account is later reactivated, the user must reset the system by logging out and then logging back in again. Doing so will allow the user to continue filing.

STEP 14 Notice of Electronic Filing (frequently referred to as the NEF) - This is the verification that the case has been filed electronically and that a case number has been assigned.

- ◆ Clicking on the [Notice of Bankruptcy Case Filing](#) hypertext link near the top of the document will generate a printable verification of the new case that can be printed or saved. This link will only appear on the Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF) for new cases.
- ◆ The NEF is served upon all case participants authorized to receive electronic service. Click on the [hypertext](#) links to view a docket or pdf image. Doing so will prompts the user for their webPACER login codes.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Deficient Petitions - Many documents that complete the filing of a new case require their own docket entry. If documents are eligible for filing at a later date, the clerk's office will identify a filing deadline on a deficiency notice. The attorney will receive this notice by electronic service and the debtor(s) will receive it in paper through the mail. The deficiency must be cured by the deadline on the notice or the case will be dismissed without further order of the court.

The clerk's office may also enter an event on the docket requiring the attorney to re-file any document. This includes PDF images that are missing, incomplete, filed in an incorrect case, or otherwise not filed correctly. All registered users in the case will be contacted via the Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF). Re-filed documents are not backdated. Failure to file documents correctly may result in dismissal of the case.